(a) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has taken steps to distribute new telephone directory;

(b) if so, by when all the customers would be able to get the directory; and

(c) the steps taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) The printing and supply of telephone directory is an ongoing process and as per existing policy every telecom district of BSNL is to print and distribute telephone directories every alternate year and in the intervening year a supplementary directory is to be printed and distributed to the subscribers. While in most of the places the directories have been printed and distributed to the customers, at some places the supply has been delayed due to non-availability of contractors, court cases, arbitration cases etc.

(c) The policy for printing of telephone directories was revised in1998 and almost all the powers were delegated to the Chief General Managers of the Telecom Circles to ensure timely publication and distribution of the directories.

Development of IT sector

3047. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the development of Information Technology has helped in any manner to provide wireless telephones in the villages of the country;

(b) if so, what is the status in this regard;

(c) the steps taken by Government to provide new technology and to develop further telephones and other Information Technology related facilities in the villages;

(d) the number of villages in Tamil Nadu where Government have come up with advanced facilities of IT during the current year; and

(e) whether Government have laid down any criteria for selecting villages in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to information available with DoT, the status of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) as on 30-6-2003 is as follows:

Multi Access Rural Radio System (MARRS) based: 145780

Land Line: 236829

International Maritime Satellite (INMARSAT) : 323

Centre for Development of Telematics (CDoT/PMP): 589

Wireless in Local Loop (WLL): 122960

Total : 506481

Traditional wireline solutions are increasingly supplemented by wireless technologies for providing connectivity in remote villages because of the number of advantages such as maintainability etc. These include point to point Very High Frequency/Ultra High Frequency (VHF/UHF) Radio, Multi Access Rural Radio System (MARRS), Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications (CorDECT), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) based WLL, INMARSAT, etc.

Technology based on IEEE 802.11b/a/g standards hold promise for high bandwidth connection in the future. For this DIT has been carrying out a project called "Digital Gangetic Plains" implemented by IIT Kanpur to test out the viability of this technology for rural connection. The project aims to use the technology based on 802.11b IEEE Standard working in the 2.4 GHz to 2.4835 GHz for providing wireless connectivity to villages in the corridor between Lucknow and Kanpur. Data up to a few Mbps throughput had been obtained through the wireless link and potential for setting up of rural information kiosks look promising, though economies are yet to be established.

(c) The details are as under:

(i) Opening up of internet telephony in the country w.e.f. April, 2002.

(ii) DIT funds Technology Development projects in these and related areas.

(iii) DIT has established four samadhan Kendras in three States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh under a pilot scheme for the benefit of rural masses.

(d) IIT, Chennai (TeNET group) has been implementing a highly successful "SARI" (Sustainable Access in Rural India) project for some time, funded by various agencies with the support and encouragement of DoT. It provides telephony and data/internet services.

(e) No, Sir.

New Telecom Exchanges in Kerala

3048. SHRI THENNALA G. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal for setting up of new telecom exchanges in Kerala in near future; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 28 New telephone exchanges are planned in Kerala during 2003-04. The details are given in the Statement.

Statement

The details of the new telephone exchanges proposed to be set up in Kerala Circle during 2003-04.

Sl. No.	Name of Secondary Switching Area	Name of the exchange
1		Kuruvattor
2		Maikavu
3		Valiaparamba
4		Karakkamala
5		Iringannur
6	Calicut	Payyoli
7		Valayam